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SUBJECT: JOINT WEEKA NO. 9

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MILITARY (ARMY)

Military Training in Middle Schools
Soviet Army and Navy Day, February 23
Soviet Army and Navy Reception February 23.

ARMY-NAVY-AIR

Photographs of rockets and rocket carriers

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 2/23/83

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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. Over-all Picture. The apparently disappointing responses from neutral countries to KHRUSHCHEV's proposal for launching the March 18 disarmament meeting in the full glare of world publicity -- to be created by the presence of heads of states or governments -- was reflected in decreasing attention in the Soviet papers to the subject of disarmament. Nevertheless, if any one area of foreign relations received more attention than others during the past week it was disarmament. The last exchange in the correspondence between Khrushchev on the one side and President KENNEDY and Prime Minister MACMILLAN on the other, was a Western one. President Kennedy's message of February 25, has thus far remained unanswered and, in fact, has been mentioned only in the briefest way by the Soviet press. Khrushchev returned to Moscow on February 25 from an extended vacation in Sochi and has been reported as having meetings with East German boss ULBRICHT in Moscow on February 26 and 27. But aside from his messages of the previous week on disarmament, which were promptly published by the Soviet press, he has not made any major public statement in the foreign policy field, thus contributing to the impression that Soviet policy is in a period of flux, it not being clear whether further efforts will be made to reduce tension with the West, whether the main Soviet effort will be channelled into an attempt to reach a compromise with the Chinese Communists or whether an attempt would be made to do both. The last major Khrushchev foreign policy statement was his speech to the WFTU meeting on December 9. It is likely that either the "campaign" proceeding the forthcoming Supreme Soviet election on March 18 or the Central Committee plenum scheduled to open on March 5, will provide the occasion for a public Khrushchev statement which might throw some light on Soviet intentions in the coming period. Meanwhile, Soviet public media have departed from the practice of playing down events in South Vietnam. The impression has been given that an undeclared shooting war already is in progress there and it has been made clear that Soviet support in propaganda, in diplomatic activity, and possibly in material has been sought. But Soviet spokesmen have taken care not to commit the USSR to any line of action regarding Vietnam other than to indicate that a peaceful solution is desirable.

2. Disarmament. The Soviet press reported the latest responses from President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan to Khrushchev's letter of February 21 under the caption, "Old Positions", but did not print the texts or even anything resembling a summary of the contents of these messages. A TASS despatch from Washington mentioned that the President had expressed hope that the disarmament conference and international developments would be such as to make useful participation by heads of governments before June 1. An important theme in Soviet comment on disarmament was that US military and political leaders are pressing for an early resumption of atmospheric nuclear tests because of the Pentagon doctrine that the US must maintain constant military superiority over the USSR. A Pravda article asserted that this attitude not only undermines prospects for genuine disarmament, but, alluding to the U-2 incident, said it is reminiscent of the activities of the US military which wrecked the 1960 summit meeting. The article said that feverish activities were underway to torpedo the Geneva negotiations because the latter could represent a departure point for lessening international tensions.

3. Vietnam. Although the Soviet press reader might have gotten some idea over the past few months that tension has been building up in South Vietnam, events there obviously have been underplayed in Soviet propaganda. In many respects the South Vietnam situation, while inherently different from that in Laos, has been treated in the same way. From this one can speculate that the Soviet Union views an enlargement of international tension over Vietnam as a source of concern, rather than as a good opportunity for expanding the frontiers of the bloc.

However, in the past week Vietnam came to the foreground in the Soviet press. A spate of articles created the impression that a most serious situation is brewing in South Vietnam and that an undeclared, shooting war is already in progress there with deep US involvement. The press reported, but did not print the texts of Chinese Communist and DRV statements calling for support of the South Vietnamese "patriots" and thus far it has failed even to mention the formation of the Vietnamese Peoples Revolutionary Party in early January. But it has indicated that communists are active in South Vietnam by citing western press reports that communists control significant parts of the countryside in South Vietnam.

It also is possible that the increase of Soviet press attention to Vietnam is connected with the current presence of a CPSU delegation, headed by CPSU Central Committee Secretary PONOMARYEV, in the DRV. Presumably this mission is related to the Soviet-Chinese ideological dispute, but it could scarcely avoid discussion of events in South Vietnam and possibly it has the mission of seeking DRV agreement to a cautious line of action in South Vietnam in the interest of not running counter to Soviet global interests.

4. Berlin/Germany. GDR boss Ulbricht made a short visit to Moscow February 26-28 and met with a very high level group of Soviet officials headed by Khrushchev. The communique on this visit gives little idea of what transpired and could either be interpreted to mean that the Soviets are providing further economic and financial assistance to the GDR to soften the blow which Ulbricht undoubtedly would experience if the Berlin question is settled on a mutually acceptable basis with the West, or on the contrary, to bolster the East Germany economy to lessen the danger of disaffection during an anticipated tense period ahead.

There still has been no discussion of the air corridor crisis in the Soviet press.

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INTERNAL - POLITICAL

5. Leadership: "To Work, Comrades!": While the people they lead have been undertaking new obligations to fulfill, over-fulfill, and pre-fulfill the plan and, if the Soviet press could be believed, bending every effort to respond to the command "To work, comrades!", with which N. S. KHRUSHCHEV closed the XXII Party Congress, members of the Party Presidium have been hard to locate since the New Year began (WEEKAs Nos. 7, Feb 16, and 8, Feb. 23,1962). There is good reason to believe that they, too, have been hard at work, but not of the sort they cared to have publicized.

This week, however, on the eve of the March Central Committee plenum, the Soviet leaders began to re-emerge from the obscurity in which they had been shrouded. Those of them who were in Moscow -- VORONOV, KOZLOV, KOSYGIN, SUSLOV, and SHVERNIK, together with Central Committee Secretaries GRISHIN, DEMICHEV, and SHELEPIN -- turned out on February 23 for the funeral of Boris L'vovich VANNIKOV (see below).

Khrushchev, accompanied by the RSFSR Premier, D. S. POLYANSKIY, was apparently about to take the train from Sochi back to Moscow. On February 25, he was in Kursk, visiting a new artificial-fiber mill, and that evening returned to Moscow. On February 26-27, Khrushchev foregathered with Walter ULBRICHT to exchange opinions on Soviet-East German relations. Seconding him were Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs V. S. SEMYONOV, and that old "anti-Party" hand, the Soviet Ambassador to East Germany, M. G. PERVUKHIN.

MIKOYAN, whose name was not mentioned in the week's press, was perhaps completing his vacation near Sochi.

6. Towards the March Plenum. Central Committee Secretaries Grishin, Spiridonov, and Shelepin favored their prospective electors with campaign speeches, in which they provided cryptic previews of the Central Committee plenum which is scheduled to convene on Monday, March 5.

According to trade-union leader Grishin, "The state is increasing the allocation of funds for the needs of agriculture", with the aim of increasing production in order "fully to satisfy the demand of the population for agricultural products and of industry for raw materials." "You may be sure that the measures, which the plenum of the CC works out, will enable us to achieve new successes in the development of agriculture in the interests of the most complete satisfaction of the demands of the toilers."

Spiridonov did not seem to hold out such great hopes for the March plenum, to judge by press reports of his speech. He simply said: "The forthcoming March plenum of the CC-CPSU, at which fundamental problems of improving the leadership of collective and state farms will be considered, will play a great role in the further upsurge of agriculture."

Shelepin, speaking in his election district in Tashkent, was, again, more hopeful. "On March 5, in Moscow, a plenum of the CC-CPSU will take place, which will discuss a report of Comrade N. S. Khrushchev on "The tasks of the

Party in improving the leadership of agriculture." The report of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev and the decisions of the plenum on this question will serve the cause of a further mighty upsurge in our socialist agriculture, will become an important new milestone in the struggle for the creation of the material-technical basis of Communism. The Party is sure that, through the efforts of the entire Soviet people, through the selfless labor of our agricultural workers, a mighty step forward will be accomplished this year in the realization of the grandiose tasks placed before agriculture by the seven-year plan and the CPSU Program." Shelepin said agricultural production should develop at such a tempo as "always to exceed demand."

7. Shifts in the Soviet Industrial and Nuclear Empires. Several events in the heavy-industrial sphere called attention to themselves, not so much because any one of them was extraordinary or unexpected as because of their coincidence in time and their occurrence on the eve of the March 5 plenum.

(a) Significant measures are being implemented in the direction of re-centralization of the Soviet economy through the activation of seventeen economic super-regions and two economic-administrative districts (Economic WEEKA No. 8, Feb. 23, and Embassy's A-680, Feb. 27, 1962). Nos. 1 through 10 of the super-regions engross the territory of the RSFSR and P. F. LOMAKO, an alumnus of the L. M. KAGANOVICH school of technocrat-administrators, appears to be playing an important role in their supervision, in his capacity of Deputy Chairman of the CPSU's Central Committee Bureau for the RSFSR (Pravda, Feb.23).

(b) The funeral of B. L. Vannikov was the occasion for an outpouring of tribute to his memory by the Party leadership. Vannikov is now reported by the Soviet press to have retired about four years ago from his post of First Deputy Minister of Medium Machine-Building, the USSR's agency for military-nuclear development. A Jew, he first achieved prominence in 1937 as a deputy to the then People's Commissar of Defense Industry, Mikhail M. KAGANOVICH, the brother of Lazar M. of today's "anti-Party group". He was later L. P. BERIYA's chief deputy for atomic-development affairs and, as such, responsible in no small measure for Soviet achievements in the field of military-nuclear development. A gauge of his importance can be taken from the six Orders of Lenin he bore -- STALIN awarded himself only three of these coveted decorations and Khrushchev only got his sixth on June 17, 1961.

Three days after Vannikov's death, it was announced that P. Ya. ANTROPOV, his old deputy in Beriya's First Main Administration, the USSR's original atomic-energy commission, had been "relieved of the duties of Minister of Geology and Conservation of Mineral Resources" (Pravda, February 25), with no indication that he was being "transferred to other work." Antropov was succeeded as Minister by A. V. SIDORENKO, earlier Chairman of the Presidium of the Kola Peninsula branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

(c) Vannikov's death and Antropov's relief as Minister of Geology recalled the recent appointment of A. M. PETROSYANTS as Chairman of the State Committee for the Utilization of Atomic Energy (Pravda, February 15). Petrosyants is presumably a graduate of the Beriya-Vannikov school of Soviet nuclear-development administrators. There seems to have been quite a lot of moving around in this sphere recently.

8. Further Extension of the Death Sentence. On February 15, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed a law extending the death penalty to persons, who, "under aggravating circumstances", endanger the life of workers of the Citizens' Militia (i.e., uniformed police) or people's druzhiny (i.e., volunteer law-enforcement squads). The law also provides for: (1) fines and confinement of up to six months for verbally abusing druzhinniki or policy; (2) up to 20 rubles, 15 days' confinement, or 30 days of correctional labor for insubordination to law-enforcement personnel; and (3) up to 100 rubles, or one year's deprivation of liberty, or corrective labor for the same length of time, for resisting a militiaman or a red-arm-banded member of the druzhiny. Commission of any of the foregoing acts, if accompanied by a threat to use force, can bring a sentence of up to five years.

The new law is clearly designed to discourage armed assaults on militiamen, militia stations, and druzhinniki (cf. Embassy's Despatches Nos. 111, August 7, and 212, September 8, and A-123, August 18, 1961).

A second measure enacted on February 15 invokes the death penalty for rape cases in which the act is perpetrated by a group of persons, or by especially dangerous recidivists, or against a minor. Heretofore, the maximum sentence for the above categories of rape had been 15 years' deprivation of liberty followed by banishment.

These two new laws were published in the official gazette of the USSR Supreme Soviet (Vedomosti, No. 8, February 21, 1962), along with a third measure enacted five days later, on February 20, which provides for up to 15 years' deprivation of liberty for persons accepting bribes, or the death penalty if the crime is committed "under especially aggravating circumstances." Additionally, penalties for involvement in bribery were generally stiffened. Under the RSFSR code passed October 27, 1960, the heaviest punishment for bribery in the RSFSR had been ten years' deprivation of liberty.

In contrast to the new laws on rape and assault against peace officers, the law against bribery has been given some publicity in the Soviet press. Sovetskaya Rossiya of March 1, 1962, recounts the case of one SPITSIN, a finance inspector who, within the short space of four years, accepted bribes amounting to more than 100,000 new rubles. The article moralizes on the necessity for the new law by reflecting that "if he [Spitsin] had known that severe punishment, including even the death sentence, might threaten him for his activities, he would have thought more than once before he embarked on a course of crime." The article does not indicate whether Spitsin will be given the death penalty ex post facto, an increasingly common phenomenon in Soviet judicial practice during the past year.

Conspicuously missing from all three of the laws enacted in this latest round of death-sentence extensions is a phrase included in laws enacted May 5 and July 1, 1961, both of which contained the language: " ... to permit [the death penalty] as an exceptional measure of punishment until its complete abolition ...". Now, the regime does not seem concerned to forecast the possibility of ultimately abolishing the death penalty.

Coincidental with publication of the new measures, on February 27, a conference of workers of administrative organs convened in Moscow (Moskovskaya pravda, March 1, 1962). Party and Government representatives from police and law-enforcement bodies, including the MVD, the courts, and the Ministry of Justice, as well as activists from druzhiny and comradely courts, gathered to discuss the problem of bringing "immaculate order" to the city. Clearly the battle against the decadent past" was going to be waged vigorously by the regime with every weapon in its arsenal.

9. "Don't Wound Their Religious Sensitivities". After two weeks of relative quiescence, the anti-religious campaign is on again, on all fronts, from the Baltic to the Kuban.

There has been no news of the ultimate fate of four Jews sentenced to death on February 11 in Vilnius (WEEKA No. 7, February 16, 1962), but another trial, that of the apparently Jewish "Fascist hangman," Grigoriy GUREVICH (or GURVICH), is under way in Novgorod. Gurevich is said to have served in the 667 Punitive Battalion "East" of the German Army from May, 1942, to October, 1944, and to have taken "an active part in the ... savage actions of the 'East" Battalion against civilians ... on orders from General Adolf HEUSINGER." Whether or not Gurevich is, in fact, a Jew, his name is one that will lead the Soviet public to believe that he is. The regime thus uses a single show trial to further both its anti-Semitic campaign and its propaganda against General Heusinger as the alleged planner and chief instigator of Nazi atrocities in Russia.

Meanwhile, L. F. ILYICHEV's admonition at the December 25-28, 1961, Moscow ideological conference, on the need to overcome "shortcomings in conducting scientific-atheistic propaganda in certain regions and republics" is being heeded in similar conferences at the republic level. At an ideological conference in Kiev on February 18, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party N. V. PODGORNYY emphasized the need for "a radical improvement of atheistic work." In Turkmenistan, a two-day "theoretical conference on questions of scientific atheism" took place on February 22-23. The Turkmen atheists are concerned especially with Islam, as evidenced by references to pilgrimages to "so-called holy places" and to the "struggle against survivals of a feudal-bey attitude towards women." The article criticized the infrequency with which picture slides and chemical experiments are used in unmasking religious "miracles."

In Tadzhikistan, Doctor of Philosophy Kh. MIRZO-ZADE has written a textbook on "The Significance of Tadjik Literature in Atheistic Teaching" for use in the secondary schools. A review of the book in Kommunist Tadzhikistana (February 20) notes that "The Islamic religion, like any other, taking advantage of the ignorance and oppression of the masses, fooled them for many centuries," and urges that Dr. Mirzo-Zade's book be translated into Russian as soon as possible.

In Latvia and the Kuban, the accent is on individual work and "tact." One V. LIEPIN', writing in Kommunist Sovetskoy Latvii (No. 2, February, 1962), claims that "Individual Work with the Believers Guarantees Success." He tells how the Burtnieksksya and Piksarskaya Lutheran parishes were closed by dint of

house-to-house calls on the parishioners. This, of course, required "much tact, patience, and thoughtfulness in order . . . not to wound their religious sensitivities." It was necessary to work with "especial gentleness" among the old people and "the so-called church activists," who at the beginning "did not even want to listen to the atheists." The exposure of the alleged "rotten deeds" of a church organist, K. SHTEYN, against young boys, helped the atheists to convince some of the more squeamish members of the Piksarskaya Parish.

In the Kuban, according to an article "Atheists Attack," in Agitator (No.2, January,1962), more than thirty groups of "sectarians" (apparently Baptists) ceased to exist, and twelve church parishes were closed, as a result of atheistic work. The Kuban atheists were also, according to the Agitator article, careful not to "wound religious feelings."

Sovetskaya Kultura, on March 1, 1962, in airing the complaint of a rural storekeeper who had received only two anti-religious posters in the past several months, revealed the following plans of various publishers:

Sovetskiy khudozhnik: in addition to the poster, "Don't Be Tricked, People," released in July of last year, a new poster, "Protect Children from Priests' Claws," has been prepared, but not yet put into production;

Agitplakat: in 1961, this organization issued three anti-religious posters with a total printing of 4,500;

Gospolitizdat: just beginning the production of anti-religious posters, it had plans to produce 100,000 sets of ten posters each, but, because the idea met with a cool reception by the book-selling organization, will produce only 12 to 15 thousand sets.

MILITARY (ARMY)

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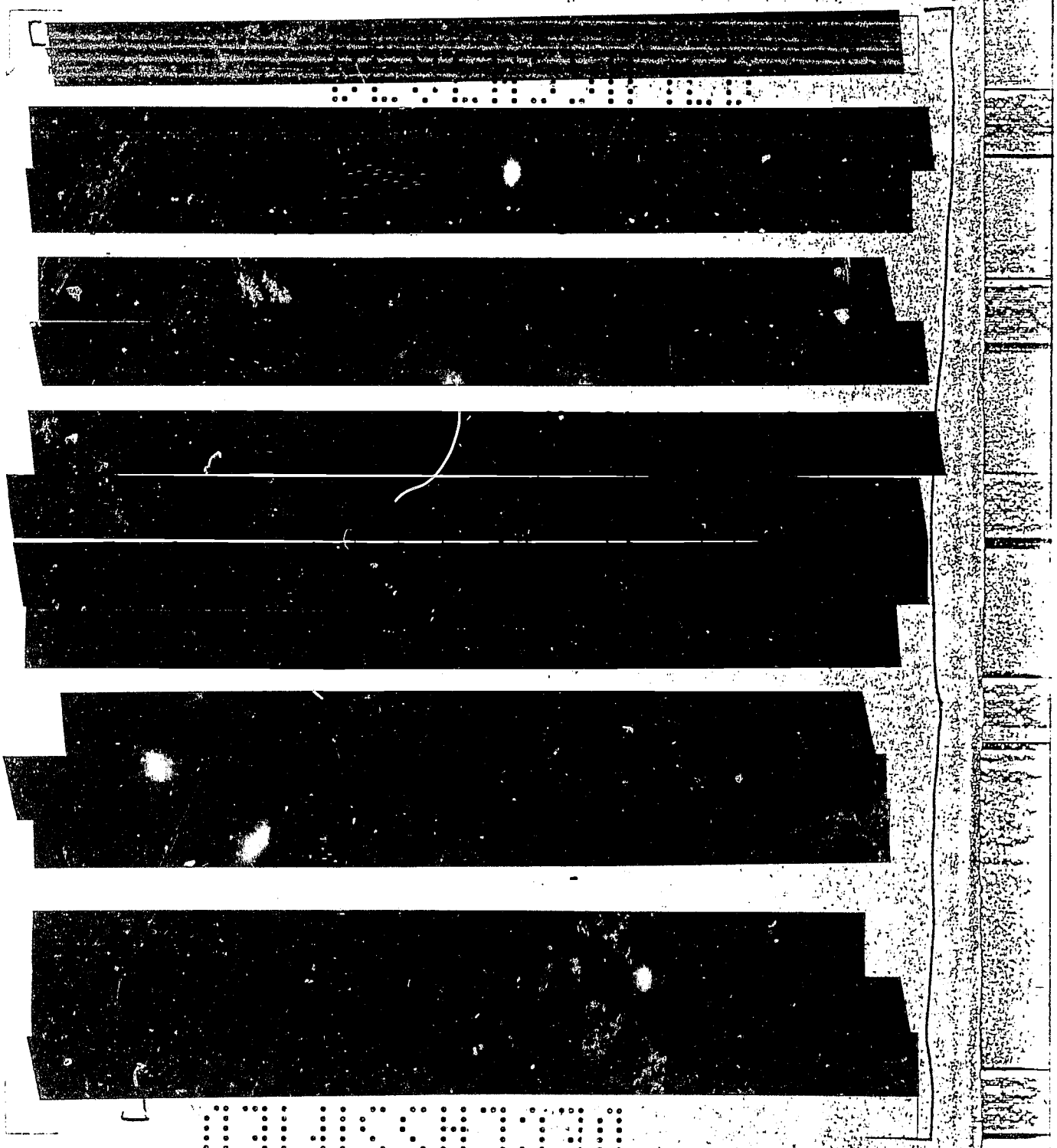

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For the Ambassador:

Boris H. Klosson

Boris H. Klosson
Counselor for Political Affairs

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